

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 213881

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL, IR,

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON DUTCH FRIGATES TO IRAN

REFS: THE HAGUE 4634, STATE 208599

1. POSTS MAY DRAW ON FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE WHEN
REPLYING TO QUESTIONS ON FRIGATE SALE:
2. QUESTION: DID THE ADMINISTRATION PULL AN END RUN ON
THE ARMS TRANSFER CEILING BY DIVERTING THE IRANIAN PUR-
CHASE OF FRIGATES FROM US SHIPYARDS TO DUTCH AND GERMAN
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SHIP BUILDERS--WHILE AGREEING TO SUPPLY THE MISSILES AND
ELECTRONIC GEAR FOR THE SHIPS?

ANSWER: THE ARMS TRANSFER POLICY ESTABLISHES QUALITATIVE
GUIDELINES AND A CEILING THAT LIMITS THE DOLLAR VALUE OF
ARMS THE US WILL SELL ABROAD. IRAN IS FULLY AWARE OF THE
TERMS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THIS POLICY.

-- CLEARLY IF IRAN PURCHASED FRIGATES VALUED AT OVER \$2 BILLION FROM THE US, SALES OF OTHER EQUIPMENT TO IRAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BE AFFECTED. IN ESTABLISHING ITS PRIORITIES FOR PURCHASES FROM THE US UNDER KNOWN CEILINGS, IRAN HAS EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR US AIRCRAFT AND OTHER

EQUIPMENT IN LIEU OF SHIPS.

-- WE HAVE TOLD IRAN THAT US SHIP BUILDERS MUST BE FREE TO PRESENT PROPOSALS FOR THE SHIPS IN QUESTION WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THE FINAL DECISION RESTS WITH IRAN.

2. QUESTION: WHY IS THE US SELLING IRAN THE MISSILES AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT FOR THE SHIPS?

ANSWER: THE IRANIANS REQUESTED THE HARPOON MISSILE AND CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT TO BE INSTALLED ON THE FRIGATES. THIS WOULD GIVE THE FRIGATES COMMONALITY WITH THE WEAPONS AND ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS BEING INSTALLED ON THE SPRUANCE SHIPS IRAN ORDERED FROM THE US SEVERAL YEARS AGO. IRAN WISHES THE SPRUANCE SHIPS AND THE FRIGATES TO BE FULLY INTEROPERABLE.

-- COMMONALITY OF EQUIPMENT WILL FACILITATE IRANIAN ABSORPTION OF THE WEAPONS AND ELECTRONICS SYSTEMS. COM-
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MONALITY WILL ALSO REDUCE FUTURE COSTS FOR SPARES AND SUPPORT.

3. QUESTION: DOES THE US FEEL THAT IRAN HAS A VALID REQUIREMENT FOR THE 12 FRIGATES? WON'T THIS GIVE THE IRANIANS A QTE BLUE WATER NAVY UNQTE?

ANSWER: WE BELIEVE THE IRANIAN PURCHASE OF FRIGATES IS JUSTIFIED. IRAN HAS A VALID REQUIREMENT TO PROTECT ITS SHIPPING LINES.

-- THE 12 FRIGATES WILL REPLACE 11 OLDER MODEL SHIPS THAT WILL BE PHASED OUT OF THE IRANIAN INVENTORY IN THE 1980'S. THE FRIGATES WILL HAVE MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT THAN THOSE SHIPS AND WILL BETTER ENABLE IRAN TO PROTECT THE OIL SHIPMENTS FROM THE PERSIAN GULF THAT ARE VITAL TO THE WELL BEING OF THE US AND OUR FRIENDS.

-- A STRONG IRAN, FULLY ABLE TO PROTECT ITSELF, IS IMPORTANT FOR THE US. THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE, JAPAN, CHINA AND IRAN'S FRIENDS IN THE AREA STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS CONCEPT.

5. POSTS MAY ALSO DRAW ON LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 5,
STATE 208599, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC CONVERSATION.

CHRISTOPHER

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